

ANDY'S RESOURCE-OF-THE-MONTH: August 2017

My Commentary on: Dr. Taylor Marshall's "5 Common Mistakes Catholics Make In Defending Catholicism"

YouTube Video Link → <https://youtu.be/jf-n51jONgo>

Check Mate

When I was a young lad, my Dad took the time to teach me the game of Chess. He first taught me the names of the chess pieces, then the unique moves the individual pieces made on the board. After this, it was time to play my first chess game with him. He was ruthless, showing me no mercy, and he forced me to think about my moves. Otherwise I wouldn't last long and he would clean my pieces off the board, as if he were wiping the kitchen counter clean. The game would end rather quickly. I can still hear his heavy Friesian accent, which would haunt me every time I completed what I thought was a good move. "Schaak!!" He would say, completing his move, which in English meant, "check."

Through the game of chess, my dad was teaching me life skills: planning ahead, patience, strategy, discerning a feeble defense, and perseverance. Once I had learned the basics of the game, he would always ask me to play, and I would accept reluctantly at first, and have another predictable losing match with him. But as my skills of the game developed and improved, I started to challenge him, and the outcome became less predictable. I started looking forward to having a match with him, and it got to the point where I would be the one asking him to play. He always accepted the challenge. I will never forget the day when I finally beat him at his own game. It was euphoria, to say the least.

I had prepared myself for that moment. I read a book on the strategies of chess, which I still have in my library. You see, first my strategy was defensive, always protecting myself against his aggressive play. I developed a good, defensive strategy, but as time went on, I also applied strategy to put pressure on his offense. I learned how to sacrifice a chess piece in order to gain an upper hand, slowly weakening his defenses. I will never forget when I made the ultimate move that put his King in "check mate." It surprised him when I said the words, because he was in deep thought on how to put me in "Schaak mate." He sat back, looking at his precarious situation. He mumbled a few Friesian words, which I translated as, "You really got me this time, young man." I have since learned to apply these skills to my daily encounters, and they affect how I conduct myself with the challenges I face in life.

The Catholic Church has embarked upon a "New Evangelization" initiative, and has challenged all of us to participate. Now this is something new for Catholic laity, because normally Catholics display their faith through actions, rather than words. Catholics have always performed acts of charity and mercy, such as attending mass regularly, helping the poor, etc., so in other words, through deeds rather than words. We generally have acted according to the old saying: "Actions speak louder than words." Saint Francis of Assisi's famous quote was, "Go out and preach the gospel, and if necessary use words." Catholics have always lived by this ideal.

But now, the Catholic Church is also summoning us to use words, along with good works. So in order to be effective in Evangelization, Catholics will need "tools" to be able to avoid the trial and error associated with bringing the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

FreeTruth.ca has a category called "Apologetics and Evangelization," containing several resources that can help us to become effective evangelizers. There are also tips to help avoid the pitfalls and mistakes commonly associated with evangelization.

Evangelization is much like playing chess. It's a skill that needs to be developed, practiced, and frequently applied in order to be effective. As evangelizers, we need to carefully plan our next move. We need to discern the proper rebuttal to our opponent's argument, so that we can properly represent the deposit of the Catholic faith. A good way to start practicing this acquired skill is to engage with people who are active in door-to-door evangelization, your first chess match. To prepare yourself for these encounters, it's important to know your subject matter and also educate yourself in their

common beliefs. Acquire a firm understanding of Catholic teaching and moral theology, and be familiar with scripture that supports these truths. This will level the playing field, so to speak.

This brings me to the video that I have chosen to highlight for this month's Resource-of-the-Month. It was produced by Dr. Taylor Marshall, a well-respected Catholic apologist (defender of the Catholic faith). Dr. Marshall gives some insight on the dos and don'ts of evangelization. The video is titled: "5 Common Mistakes Catholics Make In Defending Catholicism."

Follow these suggestions so that, when someone challenges your faith, you will be able to respond with clarity and confidence about why you are Catholic. You will also challenge others by being able to articulate why you believe what the Catholic Church teaches. I have started doing this, and I have had some great faith conversations. I believe also that people develop a greater respect and admiration for what you hold true when you take the time to explain what it is that Christ has summoned all Christians to believe and do. This is how we preserve and defend the deposit of faith, which Christ first taught to his apostles, and also handed down to us by way of apostolic succession.

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19)."

Thanks for reading, and if you find FreeTruth.ca and our commentaries helpful in your spiritual journey, then we would like to hear from you. Contact us to let us know your thoughts.

Kindest regards,

Andy